

**CBC Information Morning – Nova Scotia
December 31, 2018**

Transcript by Shaina Luck, CBC News Nova Scotia

People:

LUCK: Shaina Luck, CBC News NS Reporter

CAMPBELL: Linda Campbell, SMU Environmental Science Professor

MESSER: Murdo Messer, Cobequid Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre

RADIO INTRO:

Researchers at Saint Mary's University in Halifax are trying to understand how toxins in the environment may be harming Nova Scotia's bald eagles. Right now, no one knows exactly how much lead, mercury, and arsenic may be inside the birds' bodies. Shaina Luck has that story.

=====

LUCK: Every winter, sick bald eagles are found around the province. They're often emaciated and suffering from lead poisoning after eating animal remains contaminated with lead shot. Linda Campbell, the director of the school of environment at Saint Mary's, wants to know how much lead is in the birds.

CAMPBELL: "There is data from other parts of North America, but it's hard to extrapolate that here to Nova Scotia because our eagles are more coastal. They eat fresh water and salt water organisms, and they're exposed to different levels of contaminants.

LUCK: Campbell says the eagles may also be filled with mercury from the fish they eat, and arsenic. She took samples from seven eagles who died at the Cobequid Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre. Those samples will be sent to a lab next week for analysis. Six to eight weeks later, she will have the results.

CAMPBELL: "The idea being that to set up a baseline of information so that in the future we can test live eagles - non-lethally - with feathers and blood."

LUCK: Murdo Messer of the Cobequid Rehabilitation Centre hopes to use the results for education. He says most people who use lead shot are willing to switch once they see studies done elsewhere.

MESSER: "But some people are resistant to the idea that what they're doing may be impacting something else in the environment."

LUCK: Messer hopes a study here may help convince more people to switch away from lead. Shaina Luck CBC News Halifax.